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# IPS Update

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VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2

May 2005

## Arctic – Toxins – Action!

The Arctic Council is well known for its efforts to gather knowledge about the Arctic. Its studies of pollution in the Arctic, of living conditions in the Arctic, and its recent study on climate change in the Arctic all attracted international attention.

Less well-known are the Council's attempts to actually do something with the information it collects. Those attempts do, however, exist, most of them under the heading of the Arctic Council Action Plan (ACAP). "The important part of the name is action," says Bob Dyer, chair of the ACAP steering committee. "It's a program to create action, based on problems identified by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment program."

ACAP started after ministers from the eight Arctic States, shocked by the conclusions of the first report on Arctic pollution put together by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program in 1997, asked their officials to put together a plan to do something about that pollution. Many of the initial projects were based in Russia, which was struggling with a legacy of pollution. Russian projects included activities focused on cleaning up and phasing out PCBs, dangerous chemicals that were often used in electrical equipment, and also cleaning up sites that held old chemicals that had been used for killing insects or other pests. Some of these chemicals have also been found to be dangerous to people and wildlife.

Dyer says the condition of some of the sites is worrying. "You go to these sites, and pesticides are sitting in bags, open to the environment. Some of them were near schoolyards and playgrounds. We go to these sites and put the pesticides into new, safe storage, awaiting their final destruction." Dyer emphasises that the final destruction must be safe destruction. He says some years ago, old pesticides in Russia were dumped into trenches, where they just washed away into the Gulf of Finland. Dyer says Russian authorities have now declared that is not an acceptable method of disposal.

Apart from cleaning up existing problems, ACAP has a program to try to stop problems before they start. The 'cleaner production' initiative is focused on preventing pollution and waste from industrial sources. Dyer knows the Arctic Council is not the only group trying to do something about Arctic pollution. "One of my objectives as chair of ACAP has been to reach out to other groups, the Nordic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council's Working Group on the Environment. They work on some of the same problems as we do."

Dyer is comparing pollution 'hotspots' with the other groups, identifying common priority areas, so that they can perhaps pool resources to deal with the worst of the problem areas more quickly.

Another objective has been to involve indigenous peoples in ACAP projects. That objective has now been partly met, with the acceptance of project proposals put forward by Gwich'in Council International, and the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON). "We wanted indigenous peoples to be involved because they can bring to a project both traditional knowledge, and identification of problem areas," says Dyer.

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*Obsolete and prohibited pesticides storage in Komi Republic 30 April 2004*

The Gwich'in project, in association with the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG), in the Yukon Flats area of Alaska, is to deal with PCB sources around their communities. Local people will be trained to identify and safely handle materials contaminated with PCBs. Once all the materials containing PCBs have been found, the project aims to remove them, for safe storage and eventual disposal. Another part of the project is to develop a training manual that the Gwich'in hope can be used by indigenous peoples in other parts of the Arctic for similar projects.

The RAIPON project is on similar lines, but it includes the identification of out-of-date pesticides, as well as PCBs. The project will run in four villages, two each in the Nenets and Chukotka Autonomous Regions. As in the Gwich'in project, local people will be trained to look for and safely manage the chemicals, and also to safely repackage and store the pesticides.

Other projects with indigenous peoples are in development. Dyer says ACAP is now in discussion with the Aleut International Association for a possible project to identify and remove pesticides and PCBs on the Commander Islands off the north-east coast of Russia

Although Dyer is keen to see more projects come forward from indigenous peoples, he is also cautious "We want to make sure these projects have the support of all the indigenous peoples," he says, "We don't want to have a situation where too many projects come forward at once and they are competing with each other. We want to support the common goals of indigenous peoples."

*Clive Tesar*



*Safely repackaging old pesticides from the warehouse pictured above*



## Russian Indigenous Peoples' Work On Toxics Shines At International Event

Organizers could not keep up with the demand for the report "Persistent Toxic Substances, Food Security and Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North." The report was being handed out at an event connected to a major international conference on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) taking place in Uruguay. People from all across the world gathered to talk about the action they will take now that the Stockholm Convention on POPs is in force. The Convention is designed to stop the production and use of harmful pesticides and industrial chemicals, many of which end up in the Arctic.

Larisa Abryutina, Vice President of the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) teamed up with Sheila Watt-Cloutier, chair of ICC, to tell people that POPs are still a problem in the Arctic. They used the Russian study as evidence.

The study was conducted by RAIPON with help from a variety of partners, especially the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program, a working group of the Arctic Council. Sampling of blood was conducted in four regions across the Russian Arctic, which was then tested for a range of POPs and heavy metals.

What the study team found surprised them, says Abryutina. "We expected to find some evidence of long-range transport of pollutants, and we did find that, especially in the coastal peoples of Chukotka. But more importantly, we found that people were being exposed to pollutants much closer to home."

The study found that fermented walrus meat in Chukotka had PCB levels of 623 micrograms per kilogram. That is about 200 times the level of fresh walrus meat. The meat is cured by being buried in the ground. It seems that the meat was contaminated by chemicals leaching into the meat from the soil or from ground water.

Some people also had high POPs levels apparently because they were using insecticides and pesticides in and around their homes. The study found that "...at least some of these substances (most of which were imported from China) contain significant amount of POPs such as PCBs, DDT and HCH."

Watt-Cloutier told people at the event that the Russian study was a reminder about the urgency of taking action on POPs. "The work now really begins," she reminded delegates. "Each nation must evaluate its current legislative toxics toolkit to determine the effectiveness of these instruments. All donor nations must ensure appropriate resources are available to states in need. I call upon all nations of good will who have yet to ratify to do so quickly."

The RAIPON project not only produced results, but the way in which it produced those results was also praised. The Global Environmental Facility was a major funder of the project. A GEF representative said the project was a model for GEF projects because of its design, including indigenous, community, scientific, and international participation.

"This report is a good start," added Abryutina, "but it is clear that much remains to be done, in terms of research, in terms of public policy in Russia, and in terms of support for the affected indigenous peoples."



*Laurent Grenier (GEF), Larisa Abryutina, Jon Odland (AMAP?), Russell Shearer (Canada), Karen Kraft Sloan (Ambassador Environment Canada), Sheila Watt-Cloutier, chair of ICC.*

## Arctic Indigenous Leaders Tour Climate Change Message Around Europe

A group of Arctic indigenous leaders has undertaken a successful tour of three European capitals to spread the message of the impacts of Arctic climate change. The leaders met with politicians, policy-makers, researchers and NGOs, and also held public meetings in Berlin, Copenhagen and Brussels.

The tour was held at this time as the European Union is holding meetings this year to decide what actions should follow the greenhouse gas reductions decided on as part of the Kyoto Accord.

Arctic indigenous leaders have previously praised the Kyoto Accord as a 'good first step', but it is widely recognized that further reductions in greenhouse gas levels are going to be necessary if the Arctic is to be saved from the worst effects of climate change.

Representatives from the Arctic Athabaskan Council, The Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, and the Saami Council took part in the tour. All of the leaders were pleased with the response of the people that they talked to, and the turnout at the public meetings. Politicians and members of the public displayed a keen interest in what the Arctic leaders had to say about the evidence of climate change in their home areas.

There was also widespread media interest in the tour, which resulted in world-wide coverage of the issues of climate change, land rights, and indigenous peoples' health.

The leaders on the tour also spoke of the links between Arctic climate change and weather in the rest of Europe. They pointed out to audiences that the Arctic is a major driver of the European climate; it drives the ocean currents that warm northern Europe.



From left to right: AAC Chief Gary Harrison, RAIPON VP Larisa Abrutina, Saami Council VP Olav Mathis Eira

The leaders who took part in the tour are now planning a similar tour to major North American centres later this year.

*Sponsorship, support and assistance for the climate change tour were provided by:*

*Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade,  
Canada  
Earth3000  
Ecologic  
Embassy of Canada-Berlin  
Embassy of Canada-Copenhagen  
European Environmental Agency  
Mission of Canada to the European Union-Brussels  
WWF-Arctic Program  
WWF-Germany*

## Towards A Healthier Arctic

In its chapter on Human Health and Well-being, the recently released Arctic Human Development Report concludes, "On many issues of health and well-being in the Arctic, there is a lack of information." Filling some of these gaps in information was the focus of two meetings held in Copenhagen earlier this year. One of the meetings was of the International Circumpolar Surveillance Steering Committee (ICS). ICS is an Arctic Council group consisting of researchers and others inside the medical field. No indigenous peoples are participating so far, but the Committee expressed great interest in indigenous participation, as much of its work concerns indigenous peoples.

Two issues discussed at the meeting are particularly important to indigenous peoples; diseases that can be picked up from Arctic animals, and food poisoning. There are some diseases that are found in animals that can affect people who eat that animal – these are called 'zoonotic' diseases. An example is 'toxyplasmosis', a disease sometimes found in seals that may result in harm or death to unborn children if the mother eats an infected seal.

A type of food poisoning called 'botulism' is a growing problem in the Arctic. That is because of a change in the way that people prepare traditional foods. This is particularly found when people bury fish or meat and let it ferment. Doing this without the risk of botulism requires the right skills and the use of traditional materials. Using plastic boxes or bags creates a risk of botulism which in extreme cases can result in death. To avoid this, knowledge of the old skills concerning food preparation is very important. Botulism was suggested as an ICS research project.

Another issue at the ICS meeting was the lack of capacity of local laboratories in some parts of the Arctic that makes diagnosis of bacterial diseases difficult. ICS members say

they would like to work on the strengthening of the local laboratory facilities.

The second recent Arctic health meeting was the International Polar Year Arctic Human Health Initiative-International Advisory Committee meeting. This is a long way of saying that people working on human health in the Arctic want to look at possible health projects during the International Polar Year, which starts in March 2007. The International Polar Year is created to focus research efforts on the Arctic.

The proposed health projects have to have the participation of indigenous peoples' organizations. One of the proposed projects is on zoonotic diseases, climate change and human health. The purpose of this project is to see how many marine mammals eaten by indigenous peoples are infected with zoonotic diseases. A monitoring program operated by communities could follow trends in diseases, assess the impact of ocean changes caused by climate change and help communities make public health decisions, perhaps by changing what people eat. Another interesting project suggestion is 'Inuit Health in Transition', a study of the impact of changing environment and climate on health and diseases among Inuit and Yupik in the circumpolar north.

In the ICS meeting, the people participating were hoping for indigenous input, and in the IPY projects, indigenous peoples' organizations must be involved. This means there are opportunities in both processes for indigenous peoples to be involved, and to influence the direction of the projects.

*Mette Uldall Naver*

## Women Stalled At UN Conference

A strong delegation of more than 60 indigenous women were part of the meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York earlier this year. The meeting of the Commission was titled 'Beijing +10', and its main purpose was to evaluate the Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform of Action of 1995.

It is easy to feel small among the tall buildings of the UN Headquarters in New York. But together with almost 6,000 accompanying women, the strength felt tremendous. Many women probably hoped for the same energising and strong message from this commission as from the Beijing conference in 1995 and the Mexico Conference in 1985, which were both milestones in the work of international gender issues.

The first week, delegates worked on a new declaration 'Beijing +10'. The work was almost halted by an amendment put forward by the United States. It said that no new human rights were to be included in the

understanding of Human Rights, and that abortion should not be understood as a human right.

The majority of the participants looked upon the amendment as a step backwards in women's rights. The result was that since most of the time was spent on the proposed US amendment, no other new text, which could have strengthened the declaration was out forward.

Eventually, the US withdrew its proposed amendment and the declaration was adopted without changes. That means it simply reinforces the a declaration and plan of action adopted in Beijing ten years ago. In that sense, one could conclude that nothing much has happened to advance women's issues in the last 10 years.

The second week of the commission was spent on the resolutions. The indigenous peoples' caucus drafted a resolution, which Bolivia sponsored at the commission. This was adopted without vote at the final day of the commission. To get to this point, we all got to try out our lobbying skills in efforts to get different countries to accept the resolution.



*Masai and Saami in a friendly dance to Latin American rhythms.*

The indigenous peoples' declaration "Indigenous Peoples Beyond Beijing" focused on our common challenges as indigenous women all over the world and was mainly used as a tool and background note for media and the nation states. The declaration says that indigenous peoples' rights also are indigenous women's rights. It recognises that indigenous women hold traditional knowledge and values that contribute to sustainable development and global biodiversity. Further, it recognises indigenous women's central role in transmitting this knowledge to the next generation. It notes that culturally-appropriate education and institutions are essential for the quality of indigenous peoples' lives. Finally, it focuses on the environmental challenges the world is facing because of a short-sighted profit motive. This has contributed to global climate change, which the indigenous peoples living closest to the resources on land and nature are the first ones to face. The indigenous peoples' resolution adopted at CSW is a kind of summary of the declaration and refers to relevant UN

instruments concerning indigenous peoples adopted earlier.

The most exciting part of the two weeks was the meeting with the other indigenous women, mostly from Latin America and Africa, but also from North America, and Asia. The New York based Human Rights organisation MADRE, and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues' Secretariat organised an International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF) and training sessions on UN mechanisms. These events, taking place prior to and during the CSW, helped give us useful skills and enabled us to join forces to strategise and draft for the CSW. I represented the Saami Women's Forum at the CSW and my participation was supported by a grant to Saami Women's Forum from the Ministry for the Child and Family Affairs in Norway and by IPS, which gave me the time to go there.

*gbr*

## Brussels Interest In Arctic Grows

A World Wildlife Fund report, 'The tip of the iceberg: chemical contamination in the Arctic', was launched on February 16 in Brussels. Brettania Walker, toxics officer for the WWF International Arctic Programme, and Dr Jon Odland, a physician and professor at the University of Tromsø in northern Norway, spent two days in the European Parliament.

As the Arctic is a final destination for pollution from around the world, it is important to make politicians aware that the use of hazardous chemicals is already having global effects, even in areas where many of these chemicals are not used or produced. That's why we launched our new report in Brussels.

While we were in Brussels, we held meetings with politicians representing the Arctic countries of Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Denmark, and Canada to discuss recent contaminant research findings in the Arctic and the pressing need for better regulation of chemicals.

The reactions of the politicians we met were - in general - positive. However, this was to be expected as the meetings we set up were with representatives from the traditionally 'green' Nordic countries and Canada. Key opponents of a tough REACH were not willing or able to meet with us.

Politicians were visibly moved and concerned, especially during the presentations on wildlife and human health effects that have already been documented in the Arctic. Many politicians expressed an interest in following up on this issue, discussing the topic with their colleagues, and distributing WWF's report.

The debate on better control of chemicals in the European Union is getting increasing amounts of media coverage. Awareness is being raised among the public and politicians about the need for stronger and better chemical legislation.

It is estimated that 30 to 100 thousand chemicals are on the market today. About 95% have not been adequately tested for toxicity to humans and the environment. More than 400 million tonnes of chemicals per year are produced and are used in industry, as pesticides, and in common items including building and construction materials, electrical appliances, children's toys, cleaning products, food, and perfumes. While many chemicals benefit us and make modern-day life possible, they also have the potential to contaminate our bodies and the environment.

The European Union's REACH legislation aims to ensure adequate testing of chemicals on the market, getting rid of the most dangerous substances, and the development of safer alternatives. REACH stands for Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals.

Of the Arctic countries, REACH will directly affect the EU countries of Finland, Sweden and Denmark. Norway and Iceland will also end up implementing REACH due to their membership in the European Economic Area (EEA). It is difficult to say what effect REACH will have on contamination of the Arctic environment, as the final form of the legislation is still being debated.

REACH timetable:

- **2005:** European Parliament's first reading of REACH. Towards the end of the year the first reading is likely to have been completed and a common position adopted.
- **2006:** REACH will be voted on by the European Parliament and EU Council of Ministers.
- **2007:** REACH will likely become law in all countries of the EU and European Economic Area.

However, industry lobbying against REACH is also increasing at the same time. Politicians in Brussels face powerful industry lobbying in favour of weakening specific parts of the proposal.

The decisions on REACH, whether to amend, adopt or reject it, will be made by both the European Parliament and the European Union (EU) Council of Ministers, represented by the Environment and Industry Ministers from each EU country.

Although WWF believes the REACH legislation must be strengthened, especially to require mandatory identification and phase-out of the most hazardous chemicals, WWF supports REACH as a way to reduce harmful contamination both in the Arctic and globally. There is a need for continued targeted NGO advocacy in support of REACH and demands to strengthen specific parts of the proposal in the next year. Advocacy work targeted at representatives of important countries, such as Germany, will be important.

## Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area

The Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area (Okrug) is east of the Ural mountains, in the western part of Siberia. The area is named after two of the original peoples of the region, the Khanty and the Mansi. The River Ob' flows through its centre. Its largest city, Khanty-Mansiysk (population 55,700) is sited where the River Irtysh flows into the Ob'. The population of the area is 1,444,200 people spread across half a million square kilometres.

A historic producer of furs, the main economy in the area is now oil and gas. Since drilling started in the 1960's, the area has grown to be Russia's main oil and gas region and is one of the largest oil-producing regions in the world. This makes it particularly important to the Russian economy.

The area has a severe continental climate with average January temperatures of  $-18$  to  $-24^{\circ}\text{C}$  and average July temperatures of  $+15.7$  to  $+18.4^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Average annual precipitation ranges from 400 to 550 mm.



map by W. Dallmann

### Indigenous peoples

The Khanty, Mansi, and Nenets peoples are all found in the Area. There are more than 28,000 indigenous peoples in the area, about 2% of the total population, according to official figures.

Many still follow traditional pursuits of reindeer herding, hunting, and fishing, although industrial development has interfered with all three activities to some extent.

The Khanty-Mansi government has recently been very active in passing laws that affect the local indigenous peoples.

### History

The territory's historical name was Yurga. The first written mention of the people inhabiting the "northern lands" was recorded in the Tale of Bygone Years in 1096. The chronicle tells of an unknown people called the Yurga (Ostyaks or Khanty) and Voguls (Mansi) encountered by Russian explorers.

In 1585, Cossacks led by voevoda (army commander) Ivan Mansurov founded the first Russian fortified town, Obskoi, at the mouth of the Irtysh on the right bank of the Ob. The Mansi and Khanty lands thus became part of the Russian state, which was finally secured by the founding of the cities of Pelym and Berezov in 1592 and Surgut in 1594.

The towns that arose on the Northern Ob became trading centres. Special staging posts for changing horses (yamy) appeared on the busiest trade routes. Two of these posts, Demyansky and Samarovsky (now Khanty-Mansiysk), were built in 1637.

Both natural and climatic conditions and a relatively low population density determined the economic character of the Ob-Irtysh region of the north at the turn of the 20th century. River transport was the main means of communication, and traffic became increasingly heavy in the years following the start of shipping in the mid-19th century. Seven steamships plied the Ob and Irtysh in 1859, 107 in 1904, and 220 in 1913.

A telegraph line was extended to Samarovo in 1909, and to Berezov and Surgut in 1913.

Industry in the Ob-Irtysh region consisted of several cottage-style fish-canning businesses, while agriculture in these northern conditions was limited to vegetable growing and livestock farming. Fishing, hunting, and gathering pine nuts, mushrooms, and berries were the northerners' main occupations.

On December 10, 1930, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee passed a resolution that called for the creation of eight national areas, including the Ostyak-Vogul (Khanty-Mansi) area.

In 1977, Khanty-Mansi National Area became an autonomous area; and in 1993, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area received the status of a full subject of the Russian Federation. In 2003, a presidential decree renamed the area to 'Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area-Yurga'.

### Natural resources

The Ob and Irtysh rivers, are the largest of the nearly 30 000 rivers in the area. The area is also scattered with lakes, several of which are larger than 100 square kilometres.

Forests cover just over half of Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area. The trees are mostly spruce, fir and pine. Lichen-covered areas used as reindeer pastures are widespread in

northern parts of the area. Many edible berries such as cranberries, lingonberries, blueberries, cloudberries, and raspberries are found in the forests and bogs.

Wildlife of the area includes animals such as fox, squirrel, sable, marten, ermine, Siberian weasel, polecat, mink, otter, hare, mole, chipmunk, wild reindeer, and moose. Typical birds are geese, grouse, partridge, ducks, and sandpipers. Forty-two species of fish inhabit the various water bodies, including valuable commercial species such as sturgeon, sterlet, white salmon, whitefish, peled, and tugun.

The area's most important mineral resources are oil and gas. The largest oil and gas fields are the Samotlor, Fedorov, Mamontov, and Priobskoe fields.

The region also produces alluvial gold, and veined quartz. Deposits of several other minerals have been found.

Useful reserves of iodine-bromine mineral water have been explored and confirmed.

### Economy

The main industrial sectors are oil and gas production (86.3% of total production), power (5.5%), gas processing (3.3%), logging and woodworking (0.4%), and building material production (0.4%).

The area's natural conditions are unfavourable for agricultural development; therefore, most agricultural and food products are imported from other Russian regions.

Most freight in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area is transported by water or rail; 29% is transported by road, and 2% by air. The area has 1073 km of railway lines, more than 14 000 km of roads, nearly 5000 km of navigable waterways, and 66 000 km of pipelines.

### Government

Government authority in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area is separated into legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

The Duma of Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area is the area's representative and legislative body. It consists of 25 deputies who are elected for a five-year term.

The executive branch is a 28-member government. The government is appointed by the governor, who is elected every four years. The governor also appoints a smaller body, the 'Presidium' to deal with situations where quick decisions are required. The government is accountable to the governor and to the Duma.

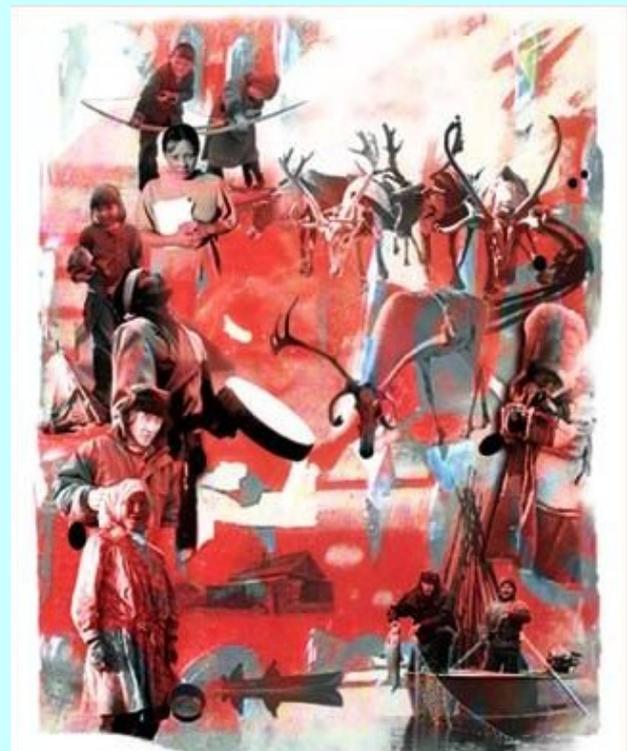
The judicial system of Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area is prescribed by federal constitutional law.

For more information see the official site of Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area:

<http://www.hmao.wsnet.ru/> or in English,

<http://www.admhmao.ru/english/>

## NEW IWGIA BOOK



### AN INDIGENOUS PARLIAMENT?

REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES IN RUSSIA AND THE CIRCUMPOLAR NORTH

Edited by Kathrin Wessendorf

IWGIA + RAIPON, 2005

This volume includes a number of articles on the legal situation of indigenous peoples in Russia and on their political participation at federal and provincial level, along with case studies from Alaska, northern Canada, Greenland and Sápmi. This book was first published jointly by RAIPON and IWGIA in Russian in 2003.

US\$ 16 + postage

Order through: [iwgia@iwgia.org](mailto:iwgia@iwgia.org)

# Schedule of Events

**29/6 – 30/6**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Barents Parliamentary Conference,**  
Bodø, Norway

**13/9 – 15/9**

**AMAP Oil and Gas Symposium,**  
St Petersburg, Russia

**13/9 – 15/9**

**AMAP Workgroup meeting,**  
St Petersburg, Russia

**13/9**

**Indigenous Climate Change Forum,** Zaragosa, Spain

**14/9 – 15/9**

**Global Ecological Restoration Conference,**  
Zaragosa, Spain  
Web-site: <http://www.ser.org>

**19/9 – 20/9**

**PAME workgroup meeting,**  
Copenhagen, Denmark.  
Web-site: <http://www.pame.is>

**20/9 – 21/9**

**ACAP Steering Committee Meeting,**  
Moscow, Russia

**29/9 – 30/9**

**Standing Committee of Parliamentarians  
of the Arctic Region, Oslo, Norway**

**2/10 – 6/10**

**The 2nd International Conference on Radioactivity in the Environment & 6th International Conference on Environmental Radioactivity in the Arctic and the Antarctic,** Nice, France

**10/10 – 11/10**

**SDWG meeting,** Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia

**12/10 – 13/10**

**SAO meeting,** Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia

**25/10 – 26/10**

**Barent Conference – Health Situation in the Indigenous Population in the Barent Region,** Trømsø, Norway

**10/11 – 13/11 2005**

**ICARP II, Second International Conference on Arctic Research Planning,** Copenhagen, Denmark  
Web-site: <http://www.icarp.dk>

**28/11 – 8/12**

**COP 11,** Montreal, Canada

## IPS UPDATE

The Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat (IPS) was established in 1994. The main task of IPS is to facilitate the involvement of Arctic Indigenous Peoples' organisations - the Permanent Participants - in the Arctic Council, particularly with regard to sustainable development, the environment and traditional knowledge.

The Indigenous Peoples' organisations approved as Permanent Participants in the Arctic Council are:

- Aleut International Association (AIA)
- Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC)
- Gwich'in Council International (GCI)
- Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC)
- Russian Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)
- Saami Council (SC)

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